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World Domination 2001/02 *LDL Marauders*: Sealed Finals Underway

by Jens Kreutzer
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We're halfway through the three-round Sealed mini-tournament of the WD Finals, and here are the match results:

1st Round
Daniel Schneider - Wilfried Ranque: C10 - R4; R6 - C10.
Byron Bailey - Richard Cripe: C0 - R10; R10 - C4.
Holger Janssen - Scott Berger: C0 - R10; R10 - C3.
Frederic Chorein - Mark Applin: C10 - R1; R3 - C10.

2nd Round
Richard Cripe - Daniel Schneider: C10 - R0; R4 - C10.
Holger Janssen - Mark Applin: C10 - R0; R3 - C10.
Frederic Chorein - Scott Berger: scheduled for January 2003
Byron Bailey - Wilfried Ranque: scheduled for January 2003

This leaves Richard Cripe in the lead with 4 GMP at the moment. Thanks go out to all of our volunteer judges! Check out the WD homepage (at www.geocities.com/arasaka.geo/goodies.html) for match logs and updates.

Interview with Frisco Del Rosario

by Jens Kreutzer
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Frisco, you're well-known in the Netrunner community mainly as a prolific writer on various aspects of our favorite game. Your first post to the NR-L goes way back to 15 June 1996.

Right. My first post asked about how Olivia Salazar combined with Chester Mix, because I didn't know the difference between installation cost and rez cost.

Nowadays, a search of the NR-L archives for "Frisco" churns out literally hundreds upon hundreds of hits. Of the people who were around "back in the days", who doesn't remember your "unrezzed blood cat" signature fondly? I'll ask about some of your more influential writings in a minute; could you perhaps tell our readers something about yourself first?

I'm almost 40. I have always lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, now a few minutes north of Silicon Valley, where **Netrunner** is as close to real as anywhere else in the world. I work as a chess teacher.

I gather that you are also writing a lot of articles on chess. Would you care to elaborate on your thoughts about how Netrunner compares to chess?

I edit the *California Chess Journal*, which requires writing tens of thousands of words about chess per year. Both chess and **Netrunner** have the same fundamental requirement at each turn—make the biggest threat possible to the opponent unless his threat is bigger than yours, in which case you must meet it. At **Netrunner**, though, too many players become entranced by the idea of bluffing—there is less reason to bluff at **Netrunner** than people think; opponents will make enough mistakes on their own if we let them.

Can Netrunner players learn something from chess to improve their play?

Everyone can learn something from chess. Chess teaches critical and linear thinking, and above all, it teaches people that they must pay attention, the most important survival skill of all, maybe.

Every Netrunner player knows "The World Would Swing If I Were King", the deck that really tries to score with World Domination.

A few do. It's a notable deck because it does more than try.

Since it is your creation, would you mind telling us something about how that idea came to be and how it took shape?

It is directly descended from an old Project Babylon deck—it is an obvious scheme with Babylon to score two or three three-point Babylons before the runner can steal seven of them, and to keep them safe with Bizarre or at least be paid for their loss with Silver Linings.

When *Proteus* was released, the World Domination agenda got a lot of attention because it was an "I win" card, but its difficulty was supposed to be out of reach. One night the light bulb went on over my head, and I realized how readily the Project Babylon idea could adapt to World Domination. World Domination turns out to be a much better card for that scheme because six Dominations takes up much less room in a deck than a dozen or more Babylons.

I put together "The World Would Swing" the night before the SiliCon in Sunnyvale, Calif., so here was this crazy deck idea—one that's never been tested—in play at a tournament. I thought the deck was interesting enough that not winning one tournament would be no big deal, but in the great narrative scheme of things, it *had* to win all its games that day.

It's a simple deck. Install World Domination as soon as possible, and advance it twelve times. If it's stolen, cash in Silver Lining Recoveries, and use those bits for Project Consultants. It is unusual in that the Corporation sometimes doesn't care if an advanced agenda is stolen, and it does some amazing things—with 40 bits, plus three Project Consultants, one Overtime Incentives, and one World Domination, the Corporation can start its turn with no cards installed but win the game in one turn.

Wizards of the Coast published an article about the deck in **The Duelist** #18, and while the **Netrunner** community was happy to get some attention in the *Wizards* magazine for a change, it didn't send thousands of people running to the game stores to buy **Netrunner** like *Wizards* had hoped, perhaps. I was really proud of that piece,

though, and when *Wizards* started publishing *Top Deck* magazine, they asked me to contribute **Netrunner** pieces regularly.

If I remember correctly, there used to be a website called "Frisky AI at the Cardplace.com" that used to feature some rather interesting articles by you. For me with my failing memory and for players who aren't around that long yet, could you please remind us what kind of material that was?

At the peak of the collectable card gaming boom, two friends—David Orr and Ed Chen—launched a small web presence where they hoped to sell their **Magic**™ collections, and publish some things about other games. I wrote a **Netrunner** piece for cardplace.com almost every week for about a year.

None of those pieces were groundbreaking, and some of them were just notes about cards I scratched into my laptop while eating ice cream. It was not such a great time for **Netrunner**, when the bad *Proteus* cards were ruining everything, and no help in the form of another expansion was in sight. Even so, the experience was a very good one, and sort of maintained my reputation as one of the game's busiest writers.

Is there any chance of making that material available to the public once more? Do you still have a copy of it?

The laptop on which those Frisky AI pieces were written is broken, and which creator really wants to recycle the old stuff, anyway?

Well, I see. A pity though that your hardware was trashed. Another thing: It's been almost seven years now, but how did it come about that you started playing Netrunner? What initially attracted you to it?

An old friend had opened a collectables store in our hometown, and I used to visit once in a while. There was always a table of **Magic** games going on, and then a dealer display of **Netrunner** showed up one day. The cyberpunk theme held a greater appeal to me than **Magic**'s "dueling wizards", and there was something about Mastiff that made me think, "wow, all this tiny card text plus a glowing blue dog—this might be a great game."

I bought a Starter deck, and lost several games in a hurry, which is probably the best way to be inspired to learn to play any game.

Do you still play from time to time? Is there a player community left where you live?

We still get together around Halloween every year for the annual "Haunting Inquisition," and we still *talk* about getting together more often than that.

As you know, the NR World Championships 2001/02/03 are setting a record right now for being the longest World Championships ever. Still, they are happening. May I ask whether you participated at all?

I never participated, and probably never will. When the idea was new, I was against it because it seemed like the **Netrunner** community had resigned itself to a little unofficial online "world championship" when the **Magic** people were earning thousands of dollars. Also at the time, my ego was huge, and I didn't think a **Netrunner** world event had any legitimacy at all unless I was specifically invited as "the guy to beat".

What many Netrunner players find the most exciting thing at the moment are the developments at the CCG Workshop website, where an online adaptation of Netrunner for the GatlingEngine is about to be realized any day now. Would you give it a shot when it is finally there, and what do you think about it at all?

I hope it works, and I hope the people who use it enjoy it. I don't want to play **Netrunner** unless my opponent is across the table, and the mental energy being expended is palpable. People who play **Netrunner** with me like the fact that they cause me to work so hard at the table, and that will not be evident in the online environment.

When you play Corp or Runner, is there some sort of maxim that flits around in your head and determines your tactics?

In a Starter deck game, the Corporation should never take an action that does not directly aim for scoring agenda.

Poker writers tell players that the object of the game is not to win the greatest number of pots, it is to win the greatest amount of money. The Runner needs to know that it is not about making the greatest number of runs, it is about making a number of profitable runs—every run should be timed to coincide with another action, either another run or a prep that combines with a successful run.

I've written about these topics at length on the list, and will keep doing so when the mood strikes.

Do you have a favorite Corp card?

World Domination.

Of course. What about a favorite Runner card?

Blackmail. In both cases, my favorite cards are "I win" cards. Score World Domination, win. There is never a reason to play Blackmail unless it is the seventh agenda point.

I have lots of frivolous favorites, though. Reconnaissance has the best chess art in **Netrunner**; Terrorist Reprisal should be a crippling shot whenever it's played; Reflector should go into almost any Constructed runner deck because Shock.r and Bolter Cluster are such good pieces of ice; Newsgroup Taunting was the basis for my first serious piece of **Netrunner** writing; Too Many Doors is the best piece of ice there is in that one great instance where the Runner pays and the Corp *doesn't*.

Just a fun question: How many copies of Joan of Arc do you own (as it's the topic of this issue's trivia column)?

Five, one of them signed by the artist.

It's been around for some time, but I think that people haven't come to grips with Classic just yet. What are your thoughts on how that expansion (well, half of an expansion) changed the metagame?

They hoped it would make stealth more important, but they introduced the expansion too late for anyone to find out, or care.

Which of the new cards did appeal to you in particular, and why?

The first piece I wrote for *Top Deck* magazine was about Data Fort Remapping, and I've written more about the card since then. It is

possibly the very best Corp card in the game, because it is the only card 100 percent guaranteed to end a run.

I was giving some additional thought to the fact that Remapping is a Gray Ops agenda. That should mean that Networked Center is golden in a Remap scheme. Networked Center has a tiny trash cost and screams at the Runner to run it, but after a Remapping has been scored, that's at least one run on Center that can be halted, and maybe Center can result in another Remap being scored easily, and so on.

What didn't you like about Classic?

I liked everything about the *Classic* expansion. It just came too late.

How do you see the future of Netrunner?

The future is whatever the players want to make of it. Maybe some will keep teaching others to play, and spreading some Starter decks around. Maybe others will like playing with "virtual expansions". It'll always be a great game.

That is an excellent closing statement. Thank you very much for your time!

"Elementary, My Dear Wilson!"
Famous Netrunner Stacks
#15: Rio/Siren

by Jens Kreutzer
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using material by Felix Borchers, Frederic Garnier, and Erwin Wagner
with input by Daniel Schneider
with support by Gilles Delcourt, Derek Evans and Patrice Gross

"Also, does anyone else find the Rio de Janeiro City Grid upgrade fantastic?"
—Russell Mirabelli, May 17, 1996

"Kein Verlaß auf Rio!" ("You can't depend on Rio!")
—Jens Kreutzer, at various occasions

Rio de Janeiro City Grid, I think it is safe to say, has been a favorite with Corp players since Day One—if the above remark by Russell Mirabelli just one month after the release of **Netrunner** is any indication of the mood back then. Rio's ability is random, of course, and it normally won't actually come into play all that often, but ending a run without giving the Runner any chance of averting this fate is a very powerful effect. Even the vague chance of Rio rolling a one will put the Runner's calculations off and disrupt his or her plans considerably. Cheap to install but almost prohibitively expensive to trash, Rio doesn't need much in the line of protection, fits into almost any Corp deck (save iceless ones) and is almost sure to annoy the Runner quite a bit.

That said, the following statement I like to quote whenever I face Rio in a game of **Netrunner** is also true: "You cannot depend on Rio to stop the Runner on that one game-deciding run." Due to its random nature, the Corp can never be sure that Rio will really kick the Runner out if push comes to shove, and therefore, in a normal Corp deck, it is best seen as a way of occasionally draining the Runner's bit pool (preferrably by rolling a one after the innermost piece of ice and thereby forcing another run). However, in order to turn Rio into a veritable weapon, players have been building dedicated Rio decks for a long time.

Obviously, the deeper the ice on a datafort is, the greater is the chance of Rio rolling a one. The way to do this is to concentrate on one big datafort and leave the others lightly protected or unprotected. Though the gut feeling that six pieces of ice should guarantee an end-the-run effect by Rio is proven wrong by statistics (the chance is approximately 66.5%), two-thirds of the time is nonetheless where is starts to get interesting.

Now, in the days before *Proteus*™ was released, players had to take the risk of leaving their other forts unprotected and just build one big Rio fort. This could either be an SDF to score their agendas in, or (more often) R&D, to protect upcoming agendas (and then fast-advancing them directly from HQ). The latter strategy, rather potent in its day, was first formulated by Glenn Elliott (May 29, 1996), who later wrote an article on the Rio/Siren strategy in the **Duelist** (Feb 1997 issue, p. 75).

There are some tricks in the Basic Set (v1.0) for enhancing such a Rio fort: First of all, mainly cheap ice should be used, because ice installation costs will be steep enough on their own, and the ice must be rezzed in order for Rio to have any effect. Candidates that come to mind are Filter, Data Wall, Shock.r, Ball and Chain, and many others. However, some cards are particularly suited for Rio forts: Vacuum Link can loop the Runner back if unbroken, letting the Corp roll some more for Rio (combo posted on May 3, 1996). Chester Mix is a staple whenever big forts are constructed. Edgerunner, Inc., Temps speeds up installation considerably. Tesseract Fort Construction might be worth a thought as well.

These kinds of Rio decks were around even before *Proteus* arrived on the scene. But when it did in September 1996, the Rio strategy was supercharged. For one, payback ice made building ridiculously large forts much easier. For example, if you use only Snowbanks, the bits generated by rezzing them will pay for Rio plus a six-piece deep ice defense!

But most importantly, Siren saw the light of day, and it became fast friends with Rio. Because of Siren's ability to redirect runs from other dataforts to a big Rio SDF, where the Runner is hopefully kicked out of Netspace by Rio before Siren can be trashed, all other forts are suddenly safe, even without any ice. In fact, a successful Rio/Siren deck won't flinch at advancing heavy-caliber agendas like Political Overthrow or even World Domination out in the open, which is the ultimate taunt for the Runner. (To be on the safe side, using Vapor Ops is also an option, but it takes up a valuable card slot.)

So, how can the Corp guarantee that the Siren fort won't be breached? The answer is that there is no guarantee because of the random nature of Rio, but with a fort that is big enough, the Runner won't be able to get through very often in the course of one game. When this happens, another Siren must be installed (perhaps with Off-site Backups). The Corp might very well lose an agenda in such a situation, which cannot be helped. But if the next Siren is installed right away, chances for winning the game are still high. Of course, in an ideal game, the Runner will never get through to the Siren, but don't depend on that, since Runners are a persistent bunch.

As we have seen from the Snowbank example above, Rio forts tend to get really big in post-*Proteus* Rio decks, with twelve pieces of ice being a reasonable aim and even more not unheard of. Rather than taking their chances on such a monstrosity, Runners might try another way of getting around Siren.

One weakness of Siren is that redirecting runs costs one bit. In the likely case that the Corp's bit pool is strained from installing and rezzing ice, the Runner might just make three or four runs on another fort in a row (or even more with the help of, say, Wilson, Weeflerunner Apprentice), costing the Corp one bit for activating Siren each time. The Runner won't break the outermost piece of ice of the Rio fort if it's harmless or else will just jack out right after it, waiting till the Corp cannot afford activating Siren anymore, and then running with impunity.

To thwart this Runner tactic, the Corp has to find a way of gaining bits for each run on the Rio/Siren fort. Tokyo-Chiba Infighting comes to mind, and it might actually work in combination with Siren, but since it is also a Region, it cannot be installed in the same fort as Rio de Janeiro City Grid. A much better solution is combining payback ice with Olivia Salazar. If a piece of ice like Misleading Access Menus is rezzed with Olivia, it will still rez for zero bits (one half of zero is still zero), but crucially, it will derez at the end of the run. As long as the outermost piece of ice is payback ice, it can be rezzed anew with each run the Runner makes, and will yield its three bits again each time. Richard Cripe posted this combo on October 21, 1996.

Proteus offers some interesting ways of making big forts tougher for a relatively small investment. Cards like Minotaur, Dogpile, Bug Zapper or Mastermind seem ideally suited as the innermost piece of ice on a Rio/Siren fort. Herman Revista (or New Blood) ensures the right ice configuration.

For the late game, Obfuscated Fortress is a real killer card, since the Runner must announce enough bits for breaking all ice on the Siren fort if he or she wants to get in, but if Rio rolls a one, all announced bits are lost anyway.

Rasmin Bridger gets meaner and meaner as the ice gets deeper, since this upgrade costs the Runner one additional bit to get past each piece of ice—even when the ice isn't rezzed yet, and Rasmin works in multiples, too.

Some attempts have been made at finding a last-ditch defense for those times when Rio is out of luck. Felix Borchers has experimented with Dr. Dreff and Jenny Jett as the last line of defense, which combines with Obfuscated Fortress in a fiendish way. Here is his version of a Rio/Siren deck, originally posted at the *Netrunner Weekly* site as a Deck of the Week (www.darkpact.de/netrunner/decks/corporation003.html):

Rio Reiser

4	**Misleading Access Menus**
3	**Quandary**
1	**Roadblock**
2	**Haunting Inquisition**
2	**Snowbank**
1	**Wall of Ice**
1	**Vacuum Link**
1	**Coyote**
1	**Washed-Up Solo Construct**
1	**Fatal Attractor**
2	**Colonel Failure**
1	**Marine Arcology**
2	**Tycho Extension**
2	**Corporate War**
2	**Viral Breeding Ground**
4	**Siren**
4	**Dr. Dreff**
3	**Rio de Janeiro City Grid**
4	**Olivia Salazar**
1	**Chester Mix**
1	**Jenny Jett**
1	**Obfuscated Fortress**
1	**Off-site Backups**
3	**Day Shift**
2	**Edgerunner, Inc. Temps**

Rio Reiser is the name of a famous German rockerboy, who died in 1996.

Felix's original decklist mistakenly had 51 cards with just 20 AP, which results in an illegal deck, and so I took the liberty to remove one of his three Edgerunners. Felix stresses that Rio/Siren takes a long time to set up, and including 50 cards provides something of a margin for long games: Running out of cards before finding the time to score the agendas isn't fun.

In order to make good use out of Dr. Dreff, Felix has included some heavy ice as well (Wall of Ice, Colonel Failure, Haunting Inquisition). Note that Rio rolls for ice installed by Jenny Jett and passed by the Runner, but not for Dr. Dreff ice, since that isn't really installed, just encountered. As Felix remarks in his deck description, the beginning of the game is the most difficult phase for a Rio/Siren deck. The aim is of course to quickly build a large subfort to eventually house the Siren, but in the meantime, HQ and R&D will be wide open to attacks. Taking into account the Runner's strategy, the Corp must decide whether both HQ and R&D should be iced initially (ideally with Quandaries), and when the focus should shift to the SDF.

If the Corp draws an Edgerunner early, it might be a good idea to start building the SDF right away. Felix warns us not to waste too many pieces of ice on other forts, since there are only 19 of them in his 50-cards deck. Alternatively, a lone Dr. Dreff might serve as a deterrent against attacks on HQ or R&D.

The Siren should normally be installed only when the subfort is already pretty big and secure, and when the Corp has the spare bits for a couple of activations. On the other hand, if the Runner aggressively targets a lightly protected HQ, it might be unwise to keep Siren there for long and risk its being trashed. Likewise, if HQ is brimming with agendas early in the game, using the SDF to score an agenda or two before installing Siren is a sensible option. Thereafter, agendas can be advanced in the open.

Felix has another trick up his sleeve with the inclusion of Viral Breeding Ground: With two advancement counters, this agenda can spell doom for a program-dependent Runner, while the drawback of trashing the whole SDF on scoring it is negated if Breeding Ground was the only card in it in the first place. Felix gives us one further hint: In a pinch, discarding an agenda from HQ

into the Archives is also a possibility (as Off-site Backups can get it back later).

In the German Nationals 1999, Felix played a variant of this deck that experimented with Virus Test Site and Fetal AI as little surprises for times when the Siren gets trashed. The Test Site disguises as an agenda installed in the open and might well flatline an unsuspecting Runner. Fetal AI also deals Net damage, but more importantly, the Runner might not have the bits left to pay for stealing it after an exhausting run to trash Siren.

As Felix's Rio Reiser deck includes Tycho Extension, it cannot be played in Revised Constructed tournaments without some switches in agenda choice. One suggestion for the bold would be to try two Political Overthrow, two World Domination, and a Viral Breeding Ground (20 AP); the Edgerunner could then go back in, as well as another supporting card of choice (like a second Chester Mix).

Also as a Deck of the Week, Erwin Wagner created the following variation of the Rio/Siren theme:
(www.darkpact.de/netrunner/decks/corporation001.html)

B-Veil, Inc.

3	**Misleading Access Menus**
3	**Quandary**
1	**Haunting Inquisition**
3	**Data Wall 2.0**
3	**Coyote**
3	**Dog Pile**
1	**Colonel Failure**
4	**Ice Transmutation**
2	**AI Chief Financial Officer**
1	**Viral Breeding Ground**
2	**Siren**
2	**BBS Whispering Campaign**
2	**Corporate Negotiating Center**
4	**Rasmin Bridger**
2	**Rio de Janeiro City Grid**
1	**Olivia Salazar**
2	**Chester Mix**
2	**Herman Revista**
2	**Obfuscated Fortress**
2	**Off-site Backups**

While Ice Transmutation is amusing in combination with Colonel Failure or Haunting Inquisition, and AI Chief Financial Officer has perhaps the most useful ability of all agendas (addressing the problem of a drawn-out game), the most interesting bit are the Corporate Negotiating Centers. Erwin realized that with an installed Siren, Runners cannot get at agendas stored in HQ, even if they know perfectly well that they are there.

One final trick that wasn't featured in either of the two decks discussed so far involves Roving Submarine. As has been discussed on the Netrunner-L back in the day, with a Siren on the table, Roving Sub plus a juicy content can be installed in the open and likely survive the next turn untrashed. Once a node like Chicago Branch has been positioned like this, fast-advancement can speed the Corp to victory.

There is a danger of losing focus, however: Rio/Siren requires a lot of cards as is, and adding some Roving Subs plus worthwhile nodes to put into them might stretch the deck structure too thin, so that the right cards never show up at the right time. Political Overthrow helps a lot in this respect, since it cuts down on the card slots needed for agendas, making room for other gimmicks. But in the end, Rio/Siren (in contrast to just Rio) isn't really about fast-advancing, as being able to advance agendas in the open is the whole point of it, and therefore I don't think that the strategy matches too well with Roving Submarine.

In the meantime, the *Classic* expansion has become available, and we should not overlook the new twists it can give to Rio/Siren tech. One smart option is including Datafort Remapping as the agenda of choice, being a non-random super-Rio that can help the normal Rio out in a pinch, which definitely has potential.

A Glacier on a Rio/Siren fort offers the option of moving it over to unprotected forts as an emergency deterrent when the Runner has just trashed a Siren—when the next Siren is installed, it can return to its former position (ideally with the help of Herman Revista). Frederic Garnier played the following deck in the 2000 Corporate Shuffle tournament in Höchst, Germany, which includes these new tricks from *Classic* (24 AP, 58 cards):

Post-*Classic* Rio/Siren

10	**Misleading Access Menus**
3	**Filter**
2	**Glacier**
4	**Data Wall**
2	**Dog Pile**
5	**Data Fort Remapping**
4	**AI Chief Financial Officer**
1	**Political Overthrow**
5	**Siren**
5	**Rio de Janeiro City Grid**
3	**Olivia Salazar**
5	**Chester Mix**
1	**Herman Revista**
2	**Obfuscated Fortress**
2	**Tesseract Fort Construction**
6	**Edgerunner, Inc. Temps**

Also, a Self-Destruct tucked away in the Rio/Siren fort might make Runners regret it when they finally manage to get through to the Siren… This is a nice insurance for those times when Rio's luck runs out, but it can easily be countered by Skullcap.

You can have lots of fun with Rio/Siren, and since the two key cards are uncommons, they shouldn't be that difficult to get ahold of (multiple copies of Siren perhaps being a minor problem). Also, the deckbuilding possibilities are endless, and the definite Rio/Siren deck has yet to be built. Even for the Runner, it can be fun (as well as frustrating, of course) to take on those giant subforts again and again—therefore, I recommend trying out this strategy (and experimenting with it) to every **Netrunner** player.

However, be aware of Rio/Siren's weaknesses as well. As has been said above, the deck can be very strong in the endgame, but is very weak in the first couple of turns, and also slow to win.

These two points account for the fact that Rio/Siren is not seen that often at tournaments: Tourney-level Runner stacks tend to be aggressive from the very start and may well eat a Rio/Siren deck alive before it has any chance to set up. Also, because of time limits for each match, Corp players tend to be reluctant to play a strategy that takes lots of time to win. But at least for casual play, Rio/Siren forts are one of the things that can make a game of **Netrunner** memorable.

Specifically, the following Runner strategies might cause a Rio/Siren Corp a headache, so watch out for these. A dedicated ice-destruction strategy (that targets HQ) might nip Rio/Siren in the bud, but once a Siren is installed behind two- or three-piece deep ice, it gets problematic for the Runner.

Rarely seen in tourney-level ice destruction stacks, a Startup Immolator that is recycled with Microtech Backup Drive still can seriously cut down on a Rio fort, as the Corp will eventually run out of ice cards (barring AI Chief Financial Officer). Also, Immolator doesn't end the run, which is a definite plus.

Clown decks such as Bozomatic eventually run for free and can then just run in each action until they luck out on Rio rolls and can trash the Siren.

Rasmin Bridger is a strong countermeasure against Clown decks, since they cannot get around that cost and usually don't have a way of gaining bits fast.

The destructive approach (Death from Above and Remote Detonator, but not Demolition Run, which is too risky versus Rio) can spell doom for the Corp, should the Runner ever get through to the Siren.

Restrictive Net Zoning on the SDF can seriously hinder the Corp, but should not be installed too early, as the Corp might then just build another fort.

Virus stacks are a problem at first if they target HQ or R&D, but if the Corp can afford to ignore the accumulating virus counters until the Siren fort is ready, it can then forgo actions once and be safe for the rest of the game. Rio/Siren is absolutely devastating versus stacks that plan to make one big winning move late in the game, like The Big Dig or the Short Stack.

Finally, for the statisticians, here is the formula for the probability of Rio ending a run on a given datafort. This formula was originally posted by Glenn Elliott (also thanks to Patrice Gross, who confirmed once more that it is indeed correct):

$$\text{probability} = 1 - (5/6)^n$$

$$\text{probability in \%} = (1 - (5/6)^n) \times 100\%$$

where n = number of rezzed pieces of ice on the datafort

The probability will of course never reach 100%, but can be made to approach it infinitely close (99.999% is reached at 63 pieces of ice). A long time before the probability even reaches 99.0% though, it doesn't make too much sense to keep adding ice to the fort, since the installation cost is just too high for such a small increase in probability, as installation costs rise exponentially: n(n–1)/2, where n = total number of ice after installation.

Number of installed and rezzed pieces of ice on the datafort	Chance of the run being ended by Rio de Janeiro City Grid	Total installation cost in bits for that many pieces of ice
1	16.667%	0
2	30.556%	1
3	42.123%	3
4	51.775%	6
5	59.812%	10
6	66.510%	15
7	72.092%	21
8	76.743%	28
9	80.619%	36
10	83.849%	45
11	86.541%	55
12	88.784%	66
13	90.653%	78
14	92.211%	91
15	93.509%	105
16	94.591%	120
17	95.493%	136
18	96.244%	153
19	96.870%	171
20	97.392%	190
21	97.826%	210
22	98.189%	231
23	98.491%	253
24	98.742%	276
25	98.952%	300
26	99.126%	325
27	99.272%	351
28	99.393%	378
29	99.496%	406
30	99.579%	435

You'll definitely want to include some Chester Mixes if you look at the installation cost column! Besides, the number of ice cards in the deck and various other pragmatical reasons limit datafort size anyway. Still, Corp players can use this table to decide for themselves just how many pieces of ice deep is best for them.

Did You Know?

Bits and Pieces from the NR Trivia Collection

#15: Joan of Arc

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Most famous for its interaction with Bartmoss Memorial Icebreaker, Joan of Arc is one of the most sought-after rare cards in the basic set of **Netrunner**. In comparison to Umbrella Policy, which is also an insurance against programs getting trashed, Joan of Arc's strengths are reusability and the ability to save many programs at the same time (as might be useful when accessing an Experimental AI node). The only way around Joan is having two

separate trash effects one after the other, like with Colonel Failure. Especially Demon-dependent Runner stacks, and of course users of the trash-prone Bartmoss Memorial Icebreaker, cannot go amiss packing one or more Joans while on the run.

With game effects out of the way, we can look at the story behind the card. The evocative artwork by John Casebeer features two knights on a chessboard, or perhaps the same knight being resurrected (re-rezzed?) at a different location. In the sky behind the two, the floating face of a woman, presumably the icon of the Joan program, observes the scene.

Both the artwork and the name of the card are an obvious reference to the famous 15th century French military leader and martyr, Joan of Arc, also known as the Maid of Orléans. Frenchman Eric Platel has provided us with a detailed account of the history of Jeanne d'Arc, as she is called in French:

Jeanne d'Arc (La Pucelle) – 1412-1431

Early years

The story begins in 1412 with Edward III, King of England, and his ambitions to become King of France as well. Since 1337, France had been engulfed in blood and fire, and now, the Hundred Years' War takes a new turn: The French army led by Charles VII takes back the lost territories, but will soon (1415) be dramatically defeated at the battle of Ajincourt.

The situation is worse than ever. France has three masters: The English troops, who occupy Normandy, Brittany, Aquitaine and Paris, the Burgundians, who rule in the east, and the Armagnacs, the faction of Charles VII, "true" King of France, who controls the rest of France.

In January 1412, Jeanne is born in Domrémy as the youngest daughter of a family of five. Domrémy lies in the heartland of the Burgundian fief, but the village and its environs have always remained faithful to Charles. Jeanne's father Jacques is a peasant farmer. She doesn't know how to read or write, but is skillful in sewing and spinning. She is a singularly pious child, often to been seen kneeling in the church absorbed in prayer. Later, she would be called "The Maid of Orléans".

At the age of 13, in the summer of 1425, Jeanne becomes conscious of weird manifestations for the first time, which she calls "voices". At first simply hearing a voice, she later discerns the appearance of those who speak to her, recognizing them as St. Michael, St. Margaret and St. Catherine, accompanied by angels. She is gradually told that God has chosen to side with the French people, and that she will participate in freeing the country under the leadership of the True King.

Glory days

Meanwhile, the military situation is growing more desperate for Charles, and on 12 October 1428, Orléans (the gate to the Armagnacs' territories) comes under siege. Jeanne's voices become urgent and even threatening in reiterating that she should go and act, as "it is God who commands it".

She finally leaves Domrémy in January 1429, dressed in male attire, and heads to Vaucouleurs, where she meets Robert Baudricourt, a rude and sceptical soldier who had mocked her during her first visit some months earlier.

This time, however, she is allowed to stay, and her cause gains ground when a few days after her announcing that a great defeat will fall upon the French army, an official statement confirms her prophecy. Now convinced of her sincerity, Baudricourt sends her on to seek out the King in Chinon. Since the King knows of the Maid's coming, he decides to test her and disguises himself, but she picks him out without hesitation amidst a group of attendants and salutes him.

The court is divided on the matter and opposes her as a mad visionary, but a secret sign she gives to the King (probably telling him about the legitimacy of his birth) leads him to believe in her mission. She receives a suit of full plate armor, an escort, and a banner with the words "Jesus Maria". Declining the sword Charles has offered to her, she searches for an ancient sword buried behind the altar of a neighbouring church and finds it at the very spot that her voices indicated.

In a letter written by a counselor of the King, it is reported that Jeanne prophesied that she would save Orléans, repelling the English to lift the siege, that she herself would be wounded but would not die of it, and that the King would be crowned in Reims. She writes a letter to the English King (can be seen at
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/joanofarc.html),
asking him to leave Orléans and the rest of France. Of course, he refuses.

With the help of experienced officers and noblemen she has met at the court (Gilles de Rays, and Jeanne's famous brother-in-arms La Hire), she enters Orléans on April 29 and gives back hope to its inhabitants and the remaining garrison, though the city still remains under siege. On May 8, after a series of victorious battles, the English siege is lifted, but Jeanne is wounded by an arrow. Her first prophecy has been fulfilled.

After many more victories, the warlike spirit of Jeanne dramatically defeats the English in Patay, opening up the way to Reims. In just a few weeks, the best English officers are either killed or taken prisoner, and as the morale of the English army is hitting rock bottom, desertions are more than frequent.

The solemn coronation of Charles is celebrated in Reims on Sunday, 17 July 1429.

The fall

An assault on Paris is attempted on September 8, but as it is not supported in earnest by the King, it is aborted when Jeanne is shot in the thigh with a crossbow quarrel. She has to be removed from the battlefield by force.

It follows a period of inactivity, in which a peace treaty is signed with the Burgundians – and the war deescalates to mere skirmishes. In Melun, Jeanne's voices make it known to her that she will be taken prisoner before Midsummer Day. While defending the garrison in Compiègne against a Burgundian attack, she is then indeed pulled down from her horse and becomes the prisoner of Jean de Luxembourg, who sends her to the English.

No words can describe the terrible apathy and ingratitude of Charles and his counselor, who could have bargained for the release of Jeanne in exchange for an English prisoner like the Earl of Suffolk. Abandoning her to a dark fate is probably a diplomatic

tactic, Charles being most in favor of a long-lasting peace with Burgundy. Jeanne is sacrificed on the reconciliation altar.

The trial

The purpose of the now ensuing trial is to sentence Jeanne to death for being a heretic and a witch. It might seem strange at first glance to see important dignitaries of Jeanne's own Church condemning her, but the following must be remembered: Because she always claimed that her orders were given to her by God Himself and wouldn't listen to anybody else, she undermined the authority of those very people. Nevertheless, the hypocrisy of calling her a witch in consequence is quite obvious.

The trial begins on 21 February 1431 and is conducted by the bishop of Beauvais, Pierre Cauchon (his name translates as "Peter Pig"), an unscrupulous and ambitious man belonging to the Burgundian faction. His 231 assessors are, for the most part, theologists and doctors of the University of Paris. Historians relate that her trial was "fair", without omitting to say that she was kept in a secular prison instead of a clerical one. The difference is not that slight, since she is at times kept in an iron cage, chained at neck, hands and feet. Because her jailers are men, she prefers to keep her male attire.

The questioning of Jeanne ends on March 15, and a document of twelve accusations is submitted to the University of Paris for debating. Meanwhile, on many occasions her judges put terrible pressure on her, in order to make her retract her statements. This practice is called "admonitions". But even when threatened with torture, Jeanne remains unshaken.

The University's response comes on May 23, denouncing the Maid in no uncertain terms: Superstitious, heretical, idolatrous and schimastic. The verdict is, as expected, death by burning at the stake. On the day before her execution, Jeanne's courage fails her at the St. Ouen cemetery. She consents to sign a retraction document and gives up her men's clothes. By virtue of this concession she is not to be burnt, but condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

The English and Cauchon are furious. But Jeanne recovers her courage once more, and two grave mistakes seal her fate: She revokes her abjuration and puts her male attire back on (some say it was because her women's clothes were stolen from her). Considered now a relapsed heretic, she is burnt at the stake in Rouen on 31 May 1431, and her ashes are thrown into the Seine river. It is recorded that up to her last moments, she keeps declaring that her voices had come from God and had not deceived her.

Rehabilitation

Weirdly enough at first glance, the rehabilitation process starting in 1450 is initiated by Charles VII. But things have changed a lot since Jeanne's death. First of all, she is now considered a national heroine who gave hope back to the French people. Since 1431, Charles has been leading assaults on Normandy, and plots to destabilize Paris were hatched. The city became quite insecure, and its inhabitants put the blame on the English occupation troops. In 1434, a peasant revolt flared up in Normandy. The King of England needed the help of the Burgundians, but they had irreversibly sided with Charles.

In this year of 1450, Paris has been liberated and is back in French hands, taken by an Armagnac-Burgundian coalition, and so is the University of Paris. The Pope, who had not participated in the first trial, is now part of this reassessment of the case. Charles has to prove that his legitimacy as the King of France is not based on the mad visions of a witch. Again, it is a political stratagem.

Jeanne is rehabilitated in 1456, six years after the second trial began. The judges use a formal mistake made by Cauchon to justify their verdict: On the morning of her execution, Jeanne was allowed by Cauchon himself to confess and to receive the holy communion, which was strictly forbidden since she was considered an excommunicated heretic.

It takes a very long time, but Jeanne's beatification is confirmed by Pope Pius X in April 1909, and she is canonized in 1920.

This brings Eric's account to a close, but there is one more bit of trivia about the Joan of Arc program. One of the staunchest supporters of the game of **Netrunner** is Jennifer Clarke Wilkes of *Wizards of the Coast*, and her much-appreciated efforts have earned her the nickname "Jen of Arc", both in reference to the pugnacious and virtuous French heroine and the one program that can save other programs.

Finally, the designers of **Netrunner** saw to it that Joan of Arc has a nemesis in the ice card D'Arc Knight: As a killer sentry, the Knight's job is trashing programs, just what Joan sets out to prevent. "D'Arc Knight" is of course a humorous version of the ubiquitous dark knight of fantasy movies or novels, or perhaps even of the **Magic: The Gathering** card Black Knight. In the artwork by Douglas Shuler, the knight's icon sure looks dark *and* black. Just good to know that Joan of Arc will usually prevail against the trasher subroutine and come back to fight another day—as long as the Runner has a bit to spare, that is.

Sources:

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